

SCHOOL MEALS, SNACKS AND UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

The Dickenson County School Board recognizes that students need adequate, nourishing food in order to learn, grow, and maintain good health.

Generally

To reinforce the division's nutrition education program, foods sold to students during regular school hours on school premises will be

- carefully selected so as to contribute to students' nutritional well-being and the prevention of disease;
- prepared in ways that will appeal to students, retain nutritive quality, and foster lifelong healthful eating habits; and
- served in age-appropriate quantities and at reasonable prices.

The Dickenson County School Board promotes high-quality school meals and snacks by

- involving students in the selection, tasting, and marketing of healthy foods and beverages that appeal to students;
- providing a variety of food options, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy foods, which are low in fat and added sugars;
- offering a variety of healthy choices that appeal to students, including cultural and ethnic favorites;
- restricting student access to unhealthy foods in vending machines, school stores, and other venues that compete with healthy school meals; and
- ensuring that healthy snacks and foods are provided in vending machines, school stores, and other venues within the division's control. The healthy options should cost the same or less than unhealthy alternatives.

The Dickenson County School Board strives to provide an environment conducive to good health by

- allowing an adequate amount of time and space for students to eat school meals;
- scheduling lunch periods at reasonable hours around midday;
- ensuring that drinking fountains are operable, clean, and convenient for use throughout the school day;
- offering extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs, intramural programs, or interscholastic athletics;
- discouraging the promotion and advertising of unhealthy foods;
- using non-food items rather than food items such as candy, cakes, soda, and foods high in fat, as incentives and rewards for good behavior or academic performance; and
- encouraging parents to support the division's nutrition education efforts by considering nutritional quality when selecting any snacks which they may donate for occasional class parties.

The Dickenson County School Board supports nutrition education and physical education by

- ensuring that qualified nutrition education and physical education specialists focus on knowledge and skill development so students are able to learn and adopt healthy eating and physical activity behaviors;
- offering nutrition education in the school dining area(s) and in the classroom, with coordination between food service staff and teachers; and
- eliminating any stigma attached to, and preventing public identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

Meals and Snacks

Meals and snacks offered as part of the National School Lunch Program or the School Breakfast Program meet, at a minimum, the requirements established by state and federal law and regulation.

Schools make potable water available and accessible without restriction to children at no charge in the place(s) where lunches are served during the meal service.

Unpaid Meal Charges

The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs are integral in ensuring that students have access to nutritious meals to support their academic success. It is also imperative to protect the financial stability of school nutrition program.

The intent of this policy is to establish a process and procedure to handle situations when children eligible for reduced-price or full-price meal benefits have insufficient funds to pay for school meals; as well as for the collection of unpaid meal charges and delinquent account debt.

- Students who qualify for free meals will not be denied a reimbursable meal even if they have accrued a negative balance on their cafeteria account.
- Students who have money to pay for a reduced-price or full price meal at the time of service must be provided a meal. If the student intended to use the money for that day's meal, the School Food Authority (SFA) will not use the money to repay a negative balance or other unpaid meal charge debt.
- Students without funds to pay for a reduced-price or full price meal are allowed to charge breakfast or lunch.
- Students are allowed to charge 3 meals.
- Students who charge a meal will receive a reimbursable meal.
- Students unable to pay for a meal at school or students who owe for a school meal will not be required to do chores or other work to pay for school meals, and will not be required to wear any wristband or hand-stamp at any time in relation to school meals.
- Employees of Dickenson County Public Schools are not allowed to charge a meal.

Communicating the Policy

- The unpaid meal charges policy will be posted on the Dickenson County Public Schools website, will be included in the student information packet distributed on the first day of school and will be provided to all transfer students during the school year. The Household Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals will be attached.
- The unpaid meal charges policy will be communicated to all division staff prior to the first day of school.
- Child Nutrition Program staff will receive training on the unpaid meal charges policy and a record of the training will be maintained as part of the professional development portfolio.
- Documentation of the communication and training plan will be maintained for the Federal Program Administrative Review.

Notification of Negative Balance

- The School Nutrition Program (SNP) staff will direct any communication regarding a school meal debt to the student's parents. The School Nutrition Manager or designee will be responsible for contacting households via telephone, by US mail or by sending a letter home by the student.
- Notifications to households will include the amount of unpaid meal charges, expected payment dates, the consequences of non-payment and where to go for questions or assistance.
- The persons responsible for managing unpaid meal charges are:
 - a. SNP school-based staff will collect payment for meals at the POS.
 - b. SNP school-based staff will contact households.

Assistance to Households

- Households with questions or needing assistance may contact the school office where their student attends or the School Nutrition Program office at: (276) 926-4643, 309 Volunteer Avenue, Clintwood, Virginia, 24228, or email Deborah Compton at dcompton@dcps.k12.va.us.

Delinquent Debt/Bad Debt

- Delinquent debt is allowable in the School Nutrition Program (SNP) and may be carried over to one successive school year.
- Bad debt is defined as delinquent debt that is deemed uncollectible at the end of the school year. Bad debt is unallowable in the SNP and cannot be carried over to the next school year. Funds resulting from bad debt cannot be recovered using SNP funds and must be offset by non-federal sources.

- At the end of the school year, the Food Service Manager and the Director of Finance will evaluate all delinquent debt for conversion to bad debt. Bad debt will be restored to the SNP from the general fund prior to the end of the same fiscal year.

Collection procedures for Delinquent and Bad Debt- Adverse Action

- When a household has reached a threshold of 4 unpaid meal charges for a student, collection procedures will be initiated.
- SNP staff will send a letter to the household with the amount of debt and date of expected payment.
- If payment or arrangements to pay have not been satisfied, SNP staff will report the household to school administration. The school administration will call the household and attempt to collect the debt.
- If the debt is not satisfied after the call, the school administration will report the household to the Food Service Manager. The manager, by phone or mail, will contact the household to collect the debt.
- If payment is not received and/or if a parent regularly fails to provide meal money or send food to school with the student and the student does not qualify for free or reduced benefits the Food Service Manager will inform the principal, who will determine the next course of action, which may include notifying the department of social services of suspected child neglect and/or taking legal steps to recover the unpaid meal charges.

Definitions

“Competitive food” means all food and beverages other than meals reimbursed under programs authorized by the National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 available for sale to students on the school campus during the school day.

“School campus” means all areas of the property under the jurisdiction of the school that are accessible to students during the school day.

“School day” means the period from the midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day.

All competitive food sold to students on the school campus during the school day meets the nutrition standards specified by federal and state law and regulation.

Each school may conduct 30 school-sponsored fundraisers per school year during which food that does not meet the nutrition guidelines for competitive foods may be available for sale to students.

The Dickenson County School Board is responsible for maintaining records that document compliance with this policy. Those records include receipts, nutrition labels and/or product specifications for the competitive food available for sale to students.

Adopted: December 18, 2014
Revised: April 27, 2016
Revised: April 28, 2017
Revised: August 22, 2018

Legal Refs: U.S. Department of Agriculture, SP 46-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies, July 8, 2016.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, SP 47-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments, July 8, 2016.

Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-207.4.

2 CFR Part 200 Section 143 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

Virginia Board of Education, A Resolution to Establish and Define Exemptions for School-Sponsored Fundraisers Pending Incorporation in the Proposed Regulations Governing Nutritional Guidelines for Competitive Foods Available for Sale in the Public Schools (Nov. 19, 2015).

Cross Refs:	EFB	Free and Reduced Price Food Services
	IGAE/IGAF	Health Education/Physical Education
	JHCF	Student Wellness
	JL	Fund Raising and Solicitation
	KQ	Commercial, Promotional and Corporate Sponsorships and Partnerships